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Table Toppings ... Day, by Day

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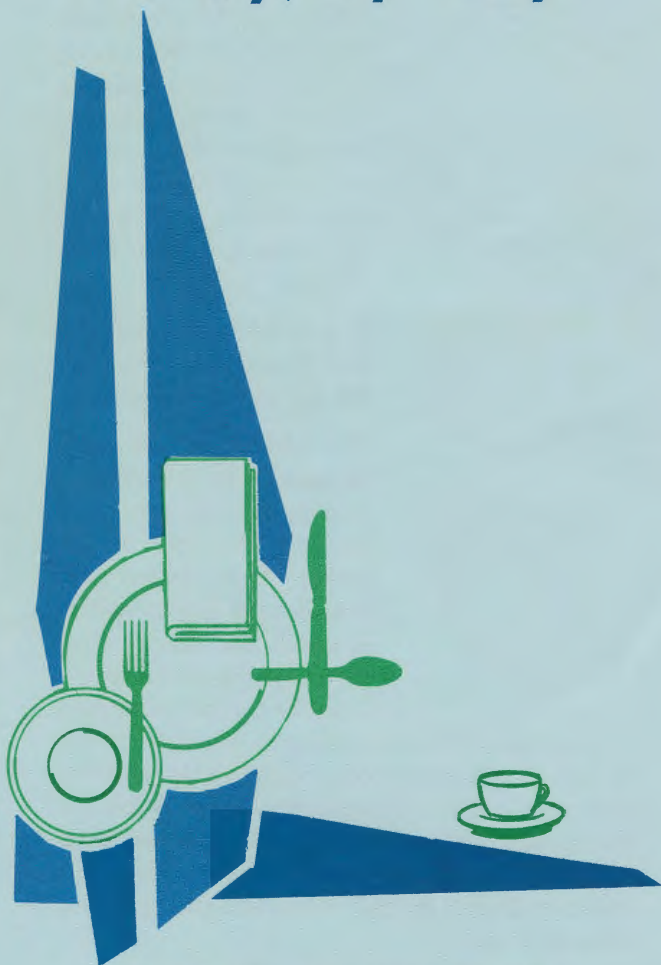
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Table Toppings

... day, by day



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Basics for Table Setting . . .

The reason for rules in table setting is to make meal time a pleasant, satisfying experience with a minimum of effort. These "rules" were made considering the comfort of the people eating, the convenience of those serving, and the appearance of the table.

Dinnerware

The **DINNER** or **LUNCHEON PLATE**, used for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, goes at the center of each place setting about 1 inch from the edge of the table. Allow at least 18 inches for a place setting; 20 to 24 inches of space for each person.

If a **BREAD** and **BUTTER PLATE** is used, it goes at the tip of the forks.

The **SALAD PLATE** may be placed in several positions. It usually appears to the left of the forks, but when no bread and butter plate is used, the salad may go at the tip of the forks.

Equally correct positions are above the dinner plate to the right of the bread and butter plate, or at the right of the dinner plate to the right and slightly below the water glass. If the salad is served as a separate course, either before or after the main course, it goes in the same place as the dinner plate.

The **CUP** and **SAUCER** belong at the right of the spoons, with the handle placed conveniently to use.

BOWLS for cereal, fruit, ice cream, or soup should be placed on a plate and put in the center of the place setting.

Flatware

KNIVES go to the right of the plate, with the cutting edges turned toward the plate. If a butter knife is used, it is placed on the rim of the bread and butter plate, either parallel or at a right angle to the edge of the table, with the cutting edge turned toward the center of the plate.

SPOONS belong to the right of the knife. If soup is served, the soup spoon is placed on the outside.

FORKS go to the left of the plate, with the first to be used farthest from the plate. If a salad is served before the main dish, the salad fork is placed to the left of the dinner fork; if the salad is served with or after the main dish, the dinner fork is placed on the outside. When only a fork is needed at the meal, it goes to the right of the plate and all other flatware is left off the table.

Placing the **DESSERT FLATWARE** on the table before the meal can cause confusion. The dessert fork or spoon may be brought in with the dessert or placed above the dinner plate parallel to the table. The teaspoon for the beverage may be placed on the saucer with the cup when the beverage is served with dessert.

To avoid confusion and an overdone appearance, usually place no more than three pieces of flatware at each side of the plate.

Glassware

The **WATER GLASS** is placed at the tip of the knife.

A **SECOND BEVERAGE** glass, such as for milk, is placed to the right of the water glass and slightly nearer to the table edge.

When **JUICE** is served with the meal, the glass may be placed between the water glass and the plate, slightly lower than the water glass.

Table Coverings

LINENS refers to a variety of table coverings in addition to those made from linen. Many colorful and attractive paper, cotton, plastic, and synthetic fabrics are available for the table.

TABLECLOTHS should have an overhang of 8 to 12 inches. Use only one dominant pattern—either the tablecloth may be patterned or the appointments, but not both. Food also gives color and design to the table; nothing should compete with its attractiveness. Too much pattern is confusing. Better to use too little design, than too much.

PLACE MATS should be large enough to hold the dinnerware, flatware, and glassware for each place setting, if possible.

NAPKINS add color and spark to a table setting. They may match or contrast with the table covering in color and design. Napkins are designed in various sizes to correspond with the needs of many types of entertaining. "Rules" about napkin placement at tables have been frightening for years. Whether the fold is at the right or left is not really important. What is important is that the napkin be easy to reach and place on one's lap for protection of clothing. Napkins may be folded in many different ways, as long as they do not complicate the function of the napkin or the table arrangement. Placement at the left of the fork is the most common, but for a formal meal or if the table is crowded, the napkin may go on the plate or in the center of the place setting.

Accessories



SALT and **PEPPER SHAKERS** are placed in convenient reach of each person at the table. Plan on one set of shakers for each two people.

JELLY, BUTTER, PICKLES, SUGAR BOWL, and **CREAMER** are arranged conveniently and harmoniously within easy reach. Avoid a merger at the center of the table.



Use **CANDLES** only in the evening, and light before guests are seated. Use candles tall enough—14 to 16 inches—so light is out of guests' eyes.



The **CENTERPIECE** is frequently flowers or fruit, but is limited only by the imagination of the homemaker. Just remember: keep the size in scale with the table and low enough so that guests can talk and see over it.

FLATWARE for serving is placed to the right of the dish or platter for which it is needed.

Breaking the Rules

Once the basics have been learned and the reasons for placing the various pieces of dinnerware understood, feel free to make alterations if they will be more convenient.

Serving the Food

Plates served in the kitchen are placed from the left of the person being served. The person serving holds the plate in the left hand. Beverages are served from the right, using the right hand.

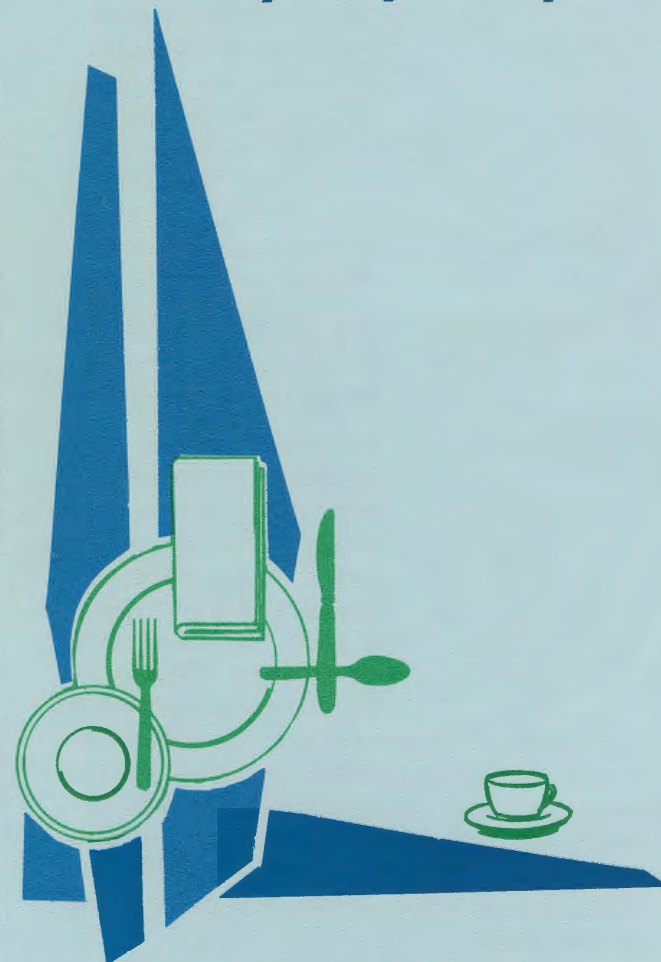
When food is passed at the table the serving dishes may be sent either to the left or to the right as long as they all go in the same direction. The most common procedure is to pass the dishes to the left.

Removing Dishes and Flatware

Serving dishes and flatware are usually removed from the table first, followed by individual place settings. A good general rule: remove everything from the left, with the left hand, except the beverage.

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